

THE ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE FOUNDATION, INC.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ICONIC AMERICAN ARTIST ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE DONATED TO GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA AND GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI IN FLORENCE

Gift Coincides with Major Mapplethorpe Exhibitions in Europe



New York, [March 22, 2010] – Three important photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989) have been donated by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the permanent collections of the renowned Florentine state museums, the Galleria dell'Accademia and the Galleria degli Uffizi. A ceremony was held today in the city to mark the historic occasion.

Mapplethorpe's *Von Hackendahl* (1985), a study of a male positioned like an ancient athlete, and *Derrick Cross* (1985), a study of the model in a yoga pose, represent the first works by an American artist to enter the collection of the Galleria dell'Accademia and are among the only modern works by any artist. The photographs, which illustrate Mapplethorpe's passion for the human form and his technical and formal mastery, were

donated by the Foundation following the success of the recent exhibition at the museum, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form*, which featured both. The exhibition, which showcased works by Mapplethorpe in the company of Michelangelo's sculptures and drawings, was the first to be dedicated to a post-Renaissance artist at the Accademia. Due to the popularity of the show during its initial four-month run, the museum extended it by another four months through January, 2010.

The artist's *Self Portrait* (1980) has also been donated to the Galleria degli Uffizi, following a request by the museum to include a Mapplethorpe work in its celebrated *Self-Portraits* collection. The photograph, which pictures the artist wearing lipstick and a feather boa, is a celebration of his transgressive side as well as a reference to the artist Marcel Duchamp, to whom he strongly related. The photograph will join the world's largest collection of self-portraits, consisting of approximately 1,700 works, which was founded in the 17th century by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici.

"Mapplethorpe's appreciation of Renaissance art informed his work throughout his career," stated Michael Ward Stout, President of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. "He would have been honored to have his photographs housed in the collections of two such venerated museums that celebrate this tradition."

"Mapplethorpe's works continue to challenge viewers, both aesthetically and through their defiance of social paradigms," continued Stout. "The fact that a significant number of institutions have chosen to examine the artist's work at this time demonstrates that it remains as relevant today as it did when he was working over 20 years ago."

Mapplethorpe is enjoying a renaissance in his own right throughout the world this year, with exhibitions in Europe, the United States and South America for which The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation is loaning works. The venues include Museo d'Arte, Lugano; NRW-Forum, Düsseldorf; Museums Sheffield and Towner, Eastbourne, in the United Kingdom; Fondazione Marconi, Milan; San Jose Museum of Art, California; and Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires.

Details of the current and upcoming exhibitions are as follows:

Robert Mapplethorpe. Perfection in Form (March 21 – June 13, 2010)

Museo d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland

www.mda.lugano.ch

Produced in collaboration with the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation and the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, which hosted the first leg of the exhibition, *Perfection in Form* features more than 90 photographs by Mapplethorpe and is curated by Bruno Corà, Director of the Museo d'Arte, Franca Falletti, Director of the Galleria dell'Accademia, and Jonathan Nelson, Chair of the Art History Department, Syracuse University in Florence. The exhibition examines Mapplethorpe's search for perfection in form, establishing a fascinating dialogue between the American photographer and the Renaissance.

"I look for perfection in form ... I am trying to capture what could be sculpture," Mapplethorpe said. Through loans from the Galleria dell'Accademia, Casa Buonarroti and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, the exhibition makes visible the connections between the work of the photographer and the Renaissance models that inspired him: the show includes three exceptional works by Michelangelo and masterpieces by Pontormo and Giambologna.

Robert Mapplethorpe (Through March 27, 2010)

Museums Sheffield – Graves Gallery, Sheffield

www.museums-sheffield.org.uk

Sheffield hosts its first exhibition of work by Robert Mapplethorpe, which comes to the city as part of *ARTIST ROOMS on Tour with The Art Fund*, a three-year nationwide tour of the new national collection established by the Sheffield-born art collector, Anthony d'Offay.

Robert Mapplethorpe (Through August 15, 2010)

NRW-Forum, Düsseldorf

www.nrw-forum.de

Marking the first time his work has been shown in Düsseldorf since 1992, The NRW-Forum is hosting a major retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's photography. The exhibition features a selection of more than 150 photographs from the collection of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, curated by NRW-Forum's Werner Lippert.

Man Ray–Robert Mapplethorpe (March 23 – May 22, 2010)

Fondazione Marconi, Milan

www.fondazionemarconi.org

Realized in tandem with the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe. Perfection in Form* at the Museo d'Arte in Lugano, *Man Ray–Robert Mapplethorpe* examines the similar yet distinct artistic points of view of these two multifaceted American photographers.

Robert Mapplethorpe (June 4 – August 2, 2010)

MALBA, Buenos Aires

www.malba.org.ar

This large-scale Mapplethorpe exhibition will be held at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), in Argentina, and is curated by Anne Wilkes Tucker, Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Robert Mapplethorpe (September 25 – November 21, 2010)

Towner, Eastbourne, East Sussex

www.townereastbourne.org.uk

The work of Mapplethorpe will be presented at Towner as part *ARTIST ROOMS on Tour with The Art Fund*. The exhibition will be shown alongside *New Documents*, Brighton Photo Biennial 2010, featuring new work on the cutting edge of photography. The Mapplethorpe exhibition will provide a historical context to contemporary debates on photography.

Robert Mapplethorpe: Portraits (October 2010 – February 2011)

San Jose Museum of Art, California

www.sjmusart.org

The San Jose Museum of Art will host the final leg of a two-year exhibition tour, showcasing Mapplethorpe's portraits. The exhibition will present an overview of this important aspect of his career.

About the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

Robert Mapplethorpe established the not-for-profit Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in May 1988, some ten months before his death, to protect his work, to advance his creative vision and to promote the causes he cared about. Serving as the first president on a five-person board of trustees, he established an initial mandate of furthering the recognition of photography as an art form of the same importance as painting and sculpture. He directed that the net revenues from the sale and licensing of his works be used to benefit museums and other artistic institutions that had shown particular interest in establishing photography departments or expanding existing ones through acquisitions, publications and exhibitions. During the last weeks of his life, he added the second mandate of supporting medical research in the area of HIV/AIDS.

In keeping with the artist's wishes, the Foundation has funded numerous publications and exhibitions of photography at a range of institutions, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, where a major grant established the photography department and created the Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery; has contributed millions of dollars to medical research in HIV/AIDS (including significant grants to the American Foundation for AIDS Research) while establishing facilities and programs such as the Robert Mapplethorpe Laboratory for AIDS Research at Harvard Medical School in Boston, the Robert Mapplethorpe AIDS Treatment Center at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, and the Robert Mapplethorpe Center for HIV Research at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center of New York; and has maintained Mapplethorpe's artistic legacy by preserving his works and by organizing or lending photographs to exhibitions at institutions around the world.

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